IEN Technical Advisory Committee
October 14, 2009, Meeting Minutes
(Approved by Committee December 2, 2009)

The September 1, 2009 meeting of the IEN Technical Advisory Committee was held in the Barbara Morgan Room, LBJ Building, 650 West State Street, Boise, Idaho.

ATTENDANCE
Members/Alternates Present:
Greg Zickau (Chair), Office of the CIO
Jerry Reininger (Co-Chair), Meridian School District
Randy Gaines, Idaho State University (VTC)
Ann Joslin, Commission for Libraries
Brady Kraft, Idaho Education Network
Jerry Piper, Cambridge Telephone Co. / Idaho Telecom Alliance
Chris Gibson, Jerome School District (VTC)
Ryan Gravette, Idaho Digital Learning Academy

Others Present:	Garry Lough, Idaho Education Network
Clint Berry, Qwest	Keith Murphy, Qwest
Sally Brevick, Office of the CIO	Lenny Simpson, ENA
Bob Collie, ENA	Joel Strickler, Qwest
Matt Hultman, Tandberg	Mike Vance, ENA
Oliver Landow, ENA	Steve Bruns, Jerome School District (VTC)

WELCOME
Greg Zickau welcomed everyone and introductions were made by those attending in person and by VTC.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES
MOTION: Jerry Piper moved and Ann Joslin seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 1, 2009; the motion passed unanimously.

GOOD NEWS REPORT
Chris Gibson, Technology Director for the Jerome School District and the newest member of the committee, told everyone that he had initially been reluctant to enter into the IEN process, given previous efforts that had met with limited success. However, he now had only good comments regarding the current project and everyone involved. The technology had improved, all the elements were coming together, and he had a strong feeling of anticipation that this would work.

IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE
Brady Kraft updated the committee regarding Phases 1a and 1b, as well as the infrastructure review process. At this point, there are five schools that are completely installed and considered fully IEN-implemented:
Clark County Jr-Sr High School
Jerome High School
Salmon High School (with a significant increase in bandwidth from 1.5Mbps to 15Mbps)

Shoshone High School
Westside Senior High School

Most of the 1a schools are described as "ordered" because they have VTC systems installed and most are sending and/or receiving content. The bandwidth has been ordered but most of these cases involve an upgrade to fiber and the IEN is working with third party, non-contracted local loop carriers to accomplish this. Site surveys have been completed at Mountain View, Lake Pend Oreille, Sandpoint, Weiser, Bonners Ferry, and Bear Lake so most of those sites are within days of being fully implemented.

With regards to the 1b schools, "ordered" indicates that the infrastructure review process is completed and approval has been given for those sites to move forward and have their bandwidth ordered. "In Process" and "Under Review" indicate that consideration is still being given to the school's architecture. For instance, it was discovered that the Gooding District has a fiber ring already in place connecting the Idaho School for the Deaf and Blind, the high school, the library, and the technical center with all sites connected. In this way the IEN can serve multiple schools for the same cost.

Initially during Phase 1a, there was a 100% implementation rate, but ultimately half the schools received the VTC equipment with the connectivity still in progress, thereby moving their full implementation status back to some time during Phase 1b. The same situation can be expected with Phase 1b schools, so 1c and 1d schools in the same regions as the 1b schools are being considered for a backup list of easier installations, particularly over the coming winter months. These 1c and 1d schools could be brought forward if necessary so that the goal of implementing 40 schools in the first year is still within reach. Brady stressed the importance of taking as much time as necessary with each school in order to ensure the implementation is carried out correctly.

Jerry Piper noted that Custer Telephone owned the fiber running into Salmon because they had laid it prior to the IEN project. However Custer Telephone was appreciative of the business brought about by the IEN and the need for additional bandwidth services.

Ryan Gravette questioned the "0" bandwidth listed for some of the 1b schools. Brady explained that these schools were in a district where bandwidth had been purchased for the district as a whole, a cheaper option.

Ryan commented on the situation presented by Boundary County, where there are individual WAN connections within the district rather than a central aggregation of bandwidth, and he queried the scalability of this circumstance. Brady noted that some school districts have a mix of equipment and services from various vendors and this makes the bandwidth less scalable than if there is customer-owned fiber. The IEN does not want to take away from school districts the responsibility and right to manage their own networks, nor can the IEN ask school districts to alter their network architecture. Instead the IEN should complement what the districts are doing and, in the case of Boundary County, the WAN was upgraded rather than bringing in another dedicated line. Brady acknowledged that this model was more expensive but the IEN did not want to over rule local decisions, particularly this early on in the process. In the future, when the middle schools are being considered, it will be more feasible to offer to assist school districts with their architecture.

Ryan queried the "0" VTC status of some schools. Brady explained that those schools were in phases 1c or 1d and would be receiving bandwidth ahead of the VTC equipment. The purchasing of VTC equipment has be done over time, in order to distribute the cost. Ryan further queried whether the technology being used for the high schools would be the same for the other schools and whether it would support the entire district's bandwidth. Brady confirmed that this was the case and the long term scalability of the technology was a priority over cheaper options.

Jerry Piper raised a question regarding the way in Qwest requests quotes from vendors. Jerry suggested that the request should be for services rather than specific infrastructure as the latter restricts the options that a vendor can provide, and the state might miss out on a cheaper alternative. During the discussion that followed, it was acknowledged that Qwest had been contracted to make these decisions and the matter could be taken up further with Clint Berry or Joel Strickler. Ann Joslin commented, and the committee agreed, that a broad approach would result in the best possible pricing solution for the IEN.

Jerry Reininger noted that schools would shortly be planning their curriculum for next year and would need to know by December whether or not they will be in Phase 1c. Brady said he was cognizant of this and the 1c list should be available by the next IEN-TAC meeting. Jerry Reininger noted further that, moving forward, there are likely to be a lot of receiving schools online and there needed to be enough originators to provide content. A greater number of originators will mean a greater number of course opportunities for those in rural school districts. Greg commented that one of the aims in developing the phase lists was to keep a mix of originators and receivers. Brady explained that, in writing the two RUS grants six months previously, some qualifying schools had been designated receivers in order to receive a VTC system to match the RUS grant. However if a receiving school wanted to offer a class that a lot of people would be interested in, then they would become an ideal candidate for upgrading to an origination system.

Ryan queried the number of schools that would be ready to receive content by the end of spring. Brady advised that any schools with bandwidth being ordered were also having VTC equipment ordered and he guaranteed that they would be online by the end of the year.

TANDBERG: UPDATE ON PURCHASE BY CISCO
Matt Hultman advised everyone of an announcement made on October 1 about CISCO wanting to acquire Tandberg. The value of the transaction is estimated at $3 billion, but this is subject to any counter offers made within a 15 day period. The acquisition is expected to occur during the first half of 2010, anywhere from 6 to 9 month's time, due to the different regulations that need to be passed for each of the countries in which Tandberg operates.

For now, Tandberg is operating "business as usual" and trying to close up as much business as possible in the near term. The imminent acquisition has not inhibited the release of new Tandberg products and Tandberg's product portfolio is not expected to change beforehand, or for several months following.

CISCO has a lot of strengths in the networking world, and Tandberg has been recognized as the leader in visual communications products – i.e. system endpoints, management systems, infrastructure products, and multi control units. Tandberg is standards-based, with interoperability in working with third parties being key to their success. It is expected that this standards-based approach will continue. A new division of CISCO will be created, based in Oslo.

There is likely to be an impact to existing contracts or purchasing agreements. With previous acquisitions, CISCO has either fully implanted the product set into their portfolio, or treated an acquisition as a wholly-owned subsidiary. At this time it can only be speculated as how the acquisition of Tandberg will be handled. Matt felt that his own role as account manager would probably change. In 12 month's time it is more than likely that there will be an overlay role to support CISCO account managers and open new doors for to integrating the CISCO and Tandberg infrastructures. There will probably be more options regarding how and where Tandberg equipment is purchased.

Questions and Discussion
Ryan queried whether the CISCO support model would be utilized with Tandberg equipment. Although he could not say definitively, Matt believed it very likely that CISCO *would* utilize their existing resources in that way.

Ryan also queried whether the CISCO market philosophy was different to that of Tandberg. Matt noted that CISCO was focused more on the high end market, the immersive, $500K telepresence systems. Some of the infrastructure products they have in place, such as gatekeepers and multipoint control units, were actually OEM products bearing the CISCO label. Those would probably go away since Tandberg has the best-in-class infrastructure products, as recognized by CISCO.

Ryan queried whether the Tandberg product line was moving towards video conferencing for individual PCs and whether the acquisition would impact this. Matt felt this was more of a complementary offering and if there was any impact from the acquisition, it would be one of growth in this area.

Greg noted that the acquisition would validate the credibility of Tandberg as a company and the IEN decision to use Tandberg as the supplier and standard. There are contracts in place with CISCO and Tandberg and the IEN will continue to pursue purchasing vehicles that will allow the IEN to obtain this equipment.

"RUMOR BUSTER" LIST
Brady explained that this agenda item had come about after a rumor had come to light that once the VTC systems were installed, the schools would be responsible for maintenance in the second year and it would cost thousands of dollars for maintenance from that point forward. The truth is that the systems are purchased with 3 years of maintenance and the IEN budgeting has taken into account the continued maintenance each year beyond that so there is no maintenance expense for the schools. Brady reminded the committee that he is part of TechTalk and if any other significant rumors come to light, he can address these immediately through this forum. This agenda item will appear again in the future if the committee becomes aware of other rumors.

OTHER BUSINESS
Agenda Items
Greg thanked the committee for their input regarding agenda items, those items not on the agenda today may appear at some point in the future and other items will continue to be requested.

RUS Grant
Brady informed the committee that two RUS grants, submitted six months previously, had scored very well. The official notification of the award has been received and they are worth millions of dollars. These are match grants and the IEN has to spend $875,000 in order to receive the funding. The $875,000 has already been budgeted and the IEN has 3 years to spend these funds. Brady thanked Tandberg in particular for their part in the application, as they had paid the grant writer fees.

Ann Joslin told the committee that she had met the previous week with Donna Hutchison of IDLA – they had discussed ways in which libraries might collaborate with IDLA, including the designing of training modules for school librarians and classroom teachers, on the resources available through the LiLI (Libraries Linking Idaho) databases. The IDLA might be one of the vehicles for delivering this professional development.

The meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Brevick, Office of the CIO